

TESTIMONY OF MARITZA BOND SUBMITTED TO THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES ON  
FEBRUARY 17, 2023

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***S.B. No. 991 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT FOR  
COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS.***

Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and members of the Committee, I, Maritza Bond, Director of Health for the City of New Haven submit this testimony in **support** of the senate bill 991. I have dedicated the past twenty-two years working to protect the health and wellbeing of Connecticut residents and have served as the Health Director of the City of New Haven for the past three years. In my time in public health, I have seen how Community Health Workers are critical to improving health equity.

Community Health Workers (CHW) build trust with residents and are an intermediary between public health agencies and the communities they serve. They provide culturally appropriate information in an accessible way that traditional governmental agencies are unable to do. CHWs are typically from the communities they serve, which allows them to have better connections with residents who grow to recognize them and trust what they say. Results from a randomized clinical trial in Philadelphia demonstrated that CHW intervention improved chronic disease control, mental health, quality of care, and reduced hospitalizations (Kangovi et al). Additionally, research has indicated that CHW interventions effectively reduce health disparities and promote health equity across a range of chronic conditions (Kaiser Family Foundation). Moreover, CHW's played a vital role during the COVID-19 pandemic, serving on the front lines in addressing misinformation and providing quality information and resources to residents.

*Medicaid reimbursement will allow for more CHWs to serve their communities, which, in turn, will improve the health and wellbeing of residents.* In the report, *On the Front Lines of Health Equity: Community Health Workers*, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services states, **“Sustainable funding is crucial for maximizing the value of CHWs” and they describe mechanisms for which states can reimburse CHW services through Medicaid.** Connecticut would be among other leading states that have made a commitment to the health of their residents by allowing Medicaid reimbursement for CHW services.

This bill will improve the health and wellbeing of residents and I fully support it; therefore, I urge you to pass it.

Sincerely,



Maritza Bond, MPH  
Director of Health